

August 21, 1961

SECRET

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 78

TO: Secretary of Defense

(SUBJECT: Berlin)

1. I wonder if we could get a report by the end of August on what military build up in conventional forces we are going to get from the NATO countries for the Berlin crisis. If you are not satisfied with it should you go to Europe and meet with the Defense Ministers of the countries involved. Or what other steps would you suggest taking?

2. I think we should have a review of our contingency plan for Berlin and also see whether we have reached any understanding with the governments for the implementation of those plans. We have to assume that some time in the fall there may be a blockade of a formal or informal kind. Have we decided with the British and the French and the Germans what our response will be?

3. If the Communists blockade West Berlin and we begin an airlift should we not be reaching some decision as to what other steps we would take against them besides economic. Could we expect our Navy to carry out any blockade of the Soviet Union for example in the Eastern Mediterranean or in the Northern seas.

4. Would you talk to me about these matters at your convenience.

/s/ John F. Kennedy

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Information Copies to:

The Secretary of State  
The Director of Central Intelligence

cc: Mr. Henry Owen  
Mrs. Lincoln  
Mr. Bundy's file  
Mr. Bromley Smith  
NSC Files

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Declassified/Released on 4/30/88  
under provisions of E.O. 12356  
by F. Grubbs, National Security Council